

# A DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL OF INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY

## Milton J. Bennett

Milton Bennett explains that intercultural understanding is individual process and defines it as continuum of different levels of personal development in the recognition and acceptance of cultural differences. Developing intercultural sensitivity means to develop capability to recognize and to accept differences between cultures' perception of the world.

Developing sensitivity goes through the following stages of ethnocentrism and ethno relativism:

Ethnocentrism			Ethno relativism		
1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Denial</b>	<b>Defense</b>	<b>Minimization</b>	<b>Acceptance</b>	<b>Adaptation</b>	<b>Integration</b>

**Denial** – complete denial of different ways of human existence (Example: black slaves haven't been treated as human beings).

**Defense** – now the others are recognized but there is great hostility and negative feelings towards them. Differences are perceived as a danger for own group. There are negative attitudes and prejudices towards other groups (Example: prejudice towards Jews in II world war).

**Minimization** – the existence of the others is tolerated, by minimizing the differences between groups. For example »We are all children of one God«. The problem is that this means that all people are same as me, or actually, we are all children of one, but My God.

**Acceptance** – acceptance of the others by respecting differences in behavior and values (Example: two language schools)

**Adaptation** – full respect and empathy with others and adaptation of personal behavior depending on cultural context (Example: parallel using of the same church for religious ceremonies of two different religions: Hinduism and Buddhism.)

**Integration** – absorbing and integrating some aspects of behavior and values of »others« into our culture, but keeping our own culture too (Example: integration of words, phrases of other culture, some aspect of dressing and food etc).